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1959-08-25, Bette to Parents

Bette J. Barto

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Subject Terms

Women and the military, Women and war, United States -- Air Force, United States -- Army -- Air Forces, Photographs, Armed Forces -- Correspondence, Correspondence -- Vietnam War -- 1961-1975, Christmas

Summary

This collection contains 139 correspondence from Maj. Bette J. Barto, USAFE to her parents while serving as a nurse during the late 1950s and 1960s. Also included are three photographs, one special orders document, and one marriage license. In several cases, Bette refers to her parents as "Lizzie" and "Hugh Elmer," or simply "Elmer." Three letters from 1961 or 1962 are undated and placed in a separate folder.

Keywords

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25 Aug. 59
Tuesday.

Dear Mom and Daddy,

By now you must be having a wonderful visit with Uncle Claude. I haven't had a letter in about 5 days, so I gather that means you did get off for California. I hope the trip out was a good one for each of you.

I'm writing at the Beauty Parlor under the dryer if that explains the erratic penmanship. I am on 3-11 for the second day today and go back on 7-3 on the a.m. That isn't very much fun, but I'd rather be off at 3, because otherwise Ray sits and mopes until I get off at eleven. He's spoiled now, just as I am, so he entertains himself as best he can and then comes for me at 11 p.m. I'm hoping he is serious about his intention to enroll in the University of Maryland extension school which we have here on base. He wants to go to school, but feels his past school age. I'm not pushing it one way or the other because he's the one who will have to study, though I'll be most happy to sit home with him while he does.

My teaching days will begin again in September - don't yet know the dates - so I've have lesson plans to occupy my off hours too.

I have been ⁱⁿ Tripoli ill again since I last wrote to you. Last Wed. I started with nausea, diarrhea and mild abdominal discomfort - this continued all through the days & nights until Saturday, I felt much improved. Then Sat. morn, Ray and I decided on a big dress up evening of dinner and dancing at the British Officers Club. I wore my new party dress and Ray was downright handsome in his air force civilian blazer (dark navy with an air force emblem on the jacket & gold buttons). He even outdid himself and wore a bow tie just to please me. Anyway, to make a long story short, I made a short evening of it by doubling up with upper mid-epigastric pain - just under the rib cage. By the time I started on the main course of dinner, I could barely sit up straight; so we came home and I took 2 APC & Cod. that Ray had left over from his last siege of the same, and I went to bed at 11³⁰pm on our first Sat. nite off together in ages - so you know I was hurting! I slept until 11³⁰am Sunday without turning over and when Ray came in from golf

at 1³⁰ pm I was up, feeling fine and ready to go. It is ever that way, and everyone expects it; so no one gets shocked, but it still is quite painful.

I stopped for a few minutes to have my nails done. I have been so busy when I am off duty that I hardly find time for hair, nails, and dresses. Ray and I went to downtown Napoli Saturday, when I got off from work, to pick up 3 of my dresses that an Italian lady was fixing for me - one with a broken zipper, one with 2 seams to let out - no new wt gain - just too little last year - (the one with the white collar in that picture you have) and one of the new ones that Grace sent me that was too tight across the hips - she did a beautiful job on them and it all cost only 1 pound 20 piasters - which is equivalent to \$3.11 - Can you imagine alterations stateside costing that little. After we got my dresses we went to an Italian meat market and bought some of the prettiest meat I've seen since I left home. It is flown in from Finland once or twice a week and is really fresh. We got 6 beautiful steaks, ground meat for meat loaf, and a beautiful roast - which I hope I can cook without ruining it. Ray had defrosted his refrigerator while I worked so we had room to freeze it immediately. Like I said, his meat hand is about the house.

It will be Daddy's birthday by the time you get this; so unless I get off in time to get a birthday card for him tomorrow afternoon this will have to suffice until I can get a late one. Many happy returns of the day, Elmer!

I'm back at home now - had to stop and buy some bread for a sandwich before going on duty. and to buy a pair of Red Cross duty shoes. I don't like them as well as the Clinics but I waited too long to write Spencer's and my old Clinics popped a hole in the side yesterday - this humidity plus constant polishing is hard on the leather - that and the sand make it a hard job to have decent looking feet - and you know how pernickety I am about my good shoes!

Gotta quit for now and get into that white outfit - only 8 hours of it - then sleep 5 + 8 hours more -

Hope I get a letter today -

Love you both
Bette